

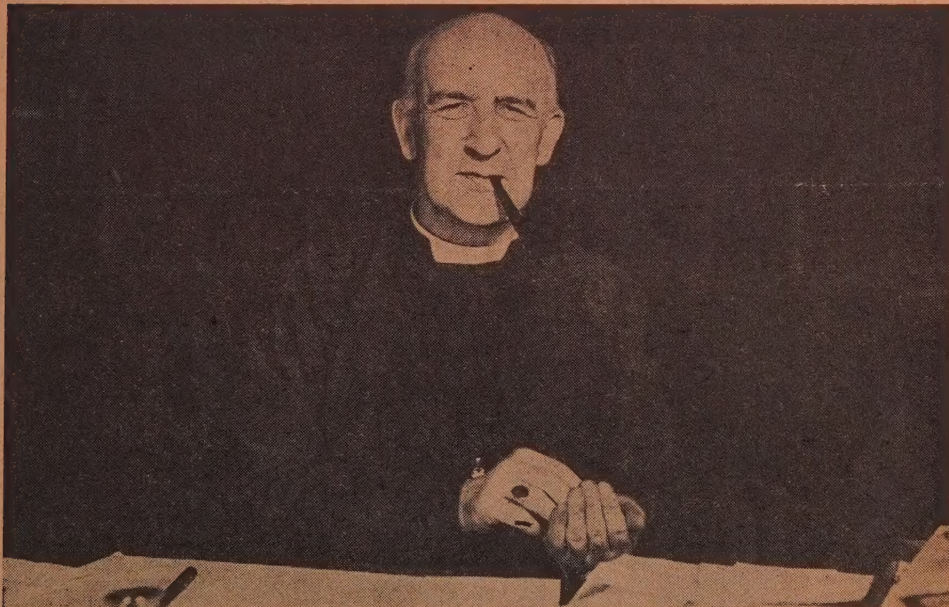
THE SPIRITUAL ISSUES OF THE WAR

This bulletin is published for readers at home and abroad by the Religions Division of the Ministry of Information, London, to elucidate the spiritual issues at stake in the war, and to provide information concerning the British Churches in wartime, as well as their contribution to post-war reconstruction.

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THE NEW ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY



Even our most distant foreign readers will have heard, long before they read these lines, of the appointment of the Bishop of London, the Rt. Rev. and Rt. Hon. Geoffrey Francis Fisher, D.D., as the successor of Archbishop William Temple, and the 97th Archbishop of Canterbury. Interest in the See of Canterbury is, however, so literally world-wide that a few facts about the new Archbishop will perhaps not be out of place in this Bulletin.

Dr. Fisher is 57 years of age, and the father of six sons, four of whom are already in the Forces. One of them, Captain Francis Forman Fisher, was taken prisoner at Tobruk and subsequently escaped; he holds the

M.C. Dr. and Mrs. Fisher (who herself is a gifted speaker and Christian leader) will be thus well qualified to understand the strains and anxieties which are such a feature of British family life to-day.

The links between him and his predecessor have been very close. Like Dr. Temple, he was Headmaster of Repton. He has been intimately associated with Dr. Temple's Ecumenical work, for whereas Dr. Temple was President of the British Council of Churches, Dr. Fisher is Chairman of its Executive Committee. He is thus well known and respected by Free Church as well as by Anglican leaders. A more intimate link

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with Dr. Temple is seen in the fact that one of his sons is named after him. His broadcast tribute on the night of Dr. Temple's death was classical in its eloquent and terse expression of the nation's sense of sudden loss.

His desire for the widest Christian co-operation is seen on the one hand in his chairmanship of an important committee for co-operation on certain matters between Protestant and Roman Catholic communions, and on the other by his vigorous defence of his action in allowing the Salvation Army to use St. Paul's Cathedral for a special function.

His powers of lucid thought and utterance have been conspicuously shown in his presentation to the Church Assembly of the "Reorganization of Areas" Measure—perhaps the most revolutionary plan ever devised for the rationalization of English parochial life—and in his chairmanship of the "Churches' Main Committee," a co-operative committee on ecclesiastical war damage.

Something of Dr. Fisher's gift in the realm of spiritual leadership can be seen in a special series of broadcast talks given by him and subsequently published as a useful devotional booklet under the title of "Faith."

Dr. Fisher has not written extensively on theological and philosophical subjects, as did Dr. Temple, but his three *Firsts* at Oxford stamped him as a man of first-class intellectual ability and this promise has certainly been fulfilled. His early sporting achievements—he was in the Oxford trial eights—will give him yet another link with the British people, whose love of sport has not been extinguished even if it has been partially eclipsed by the war.

Christian people in other countries can certainly feel that the new Archbishop of Canterbury is a typical Englishman. In the pulpit or at the microphone they will find him restrained, lucid and unemotional, but convincing with that quiet authority which attaches to apt, well-pondered and well-chosen words.

THE UNIFYING FORCES OF EUROPE

We continue with the valuable speeches given in the House of Lords' Debate on the above subject. This week we give the speech by the Bishop of Chichester which fits conveniently into our available space: other contributions will appear next week.

The following is the text of the Bishop's speech:—

"My Lords, there are many factors which make the realization of European unity

peculiarly difficult to-day. I agree with the noble Viscount, Lord Templewood, that a preliminary necessity is the ending of German military aggression, but allowing for that there are other obstacles. Some are material, arising directly out of the sufferings and losses of the war; some are political, and have to do with the decline of European Great Powers and the rise of World Powers with their desire for spheres of influence in Europe; but I think that the chief obstacle is spiritual, a profound distrust of nation for nation, Party for Party and citizen for citizen, together with an increasing moral disintegration.

The Four Spiritual Traditions of Europe

"In order, therefore, to rebuild the underlying European unity, and to secure for every European citizen certain fundamental rights, of which the noble Viscount has so powerfully and impressively reminded us, we have to go beyond politics. Not only has Europe never attained political organization as a real society of peoples, but something deeper than a political impulse is required to secure lasting unity now. I suggest that we are more likely to achieve the goal of European unity if we build on the culture which all European peoples have in common. The peoples of Europe all possess a common form of culture, based on four common spiritual traditions. There is the humanist tradition, which lies behind the literary and intellectual culture of the educated classes and is largely responsible for the liberal and humanitarian element in our civilization. There is the scientific tradition, perhaps the clearest example of the part played by individual collaboration in European culture. There is the tradition of law and government which, while naturally more affected by national political divisions, possesses important common elements which distinguish European from Asiatic society. Lastly, there is the Christian religion, which provided the original bonds of unity between European peoples and has influenced every part of Europe and every section of European society.

"All these traditions are important, but it is the last which seems to me the most important and potentially unifying of them all. Few will deny—and the fact has constantly been affirmed to-day—that of all the crises in which we are involved the spiritual crisis is the gravest. There is a profound sense of frustration and despair; there is not only a material but a moral disintegration. Without a recovery of purpose, without a restoration of hope, the dissolu-

tion of European culture is inevitable. The fundamental menace to our civilization is not Communism but Nihilism—the attitude of destruction and negation which calls evil good and good evil.

“I was much struck by the reflections which fell from the noble Viscount, Lord Templewood, as to the possibility of a permanent body carefully composed for improving and advising on and raising moral standards. My noble friend Lord Samuel has already expressed the conviction that the best charters and Constitutions are of little avail without religion. I welcome what fell from his lips and am in full sympathy with his plea for the co-operation of the religions of the world for the general deepening of spiritual forces in all the continents. It will not be disputed, however, that when we speak of religion in Europe, it must be the Christian religion with which we have to deal. Two facts emphasize the significance of Christianity as a great unifying force for Europe, one permanent, the other bound up with our contemporary situation. The permanent fact is that in spite of the divisions between Roman Catholic and Orthodox in the eleventh century and between Roman Catholics and Protestants in the sixteenth century, and in spite of the deep differences in the dogmatic field, there is still such a thing as a common Christian faith. The contemporary fact is that throughout the World War the Churches, Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox, have been among the most determined adversaries of Nazism.

Christian Resistance has been Co-operative

“Men of all the Churches have stood together against dictatorship, and have stood side by side with the men of the resistance movements. I do not say that the Church opposition has been on the same scale in every country; in some it is almost total, in others it is a minority. But the point is that all over Europe, from Trondhjem to Athens, from Stalingrad to Toulouse there is this great Church opposition to the Nazis. All over Europe there is a network of organized Christian bodies, Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox, giving witness to those fundamental rights and liberties without which European civilization cannot continue. The principles which have directed and are directing the Church opposition to Nazi dictatorship in the war are not likely to be abandoned when reconstruction begins, and there is every reason to look for the con-

tinued co-operation of Christians of all Churches in following those principles up.

“Allow me to remind your Lordships of various statements—I will only quote one—made by the Pope on the principles of reconstruction. There was his first Encyclical at the beginning of the war, *Summi Pontificatus*; there were his famous five points on Christmas Eve, 1939, and his subsequent allocutions to the Cardinals. His most recent plea for co-operation between the Roman Catholics and other Christians was made on the fifth anniversary of the war, September 1st, pointing to the misery into which the spirit of violence and the domination of force have plunged mankind. Speaking of the co-operation of men of different camps as ‘companions in arms for the great enterprise of reconstructing a world which has been shaken to its foundations,’ he said:

“There could be nothing more natural or more timely; nothing—given the necessary precautions—more proper for all those who pride themselves on the name of Christian and who profess their faith in Christ, with a life conforming exactly to His laws. This disposition and readiness to work together in a spirit of genuine brotherly harmony not only answers to the moral obligation to fulfil one’s civic duty, but rises to the dignity of a postulate of conscience, sustained and guided by the love of God and of one’s neighbour, with added strength given by the warning signs of the moment and by the intensity of effort called for in order to save the nations.”

Co-operation for Reconstruction

“There is a similar movement for co-operation in reconstruction among those who are not Roman Catholics. On this side I can speak from intimate personal experience. There is the World Council of the Churches in process of formation, in the shaping of which the Protestant and Orthodox Churches of Europe, with the Church of England, the Church of Scotland, all the Churches of the British Isles and the American Churches have been for several years actively associated. Its principal purpose is to facilitate common action by the Churches, to promote co-operation in study, to promote the growth of an Ecumenical conscience in the members of all the Churches. The late Archbishop of Canterbury was its President. The leaders of the American Churches are its active supporters. But the point to which I wish to call special attention is this: Under its auspices a Reconstruction Department has been lately formed with the special object of assisting in the rebuilding of Christian institutions in Europe. It represents a common effort on the non-Roman Catholic side to relieve and rehabilitate all the suffering Churches. No Church, either of friend or foe,

is in principle excluded. Nor do the more prosperous Churches pose as patrons. The receiving and giving Churches are both upon the controlling committee. The Churches have not the resources of States, but while the material side is necessary, it is not the principal point in a reconstruction crusade. If the Churches can together by common action help to restore the foundations of European life and bring new hope and life to the nations in which they minister the results will be very far-reaching.

"I would add a special word upon the part which the Church of Russia might play in the general work of Christian reconstruction. The causes for which the World Council stands, notably reconstruction, are causes in which the Church of Russia's aid would be of outstanding value. There are many Churches, especially in Eastern and Northern Europe—the Orthodox Churches in the Balkan countries, the Evangelical, Lutheran, and Reformed Churches and some Orthodox Churches in Northern countries, the Reformed Churches and the Protestant Churches of the Augsburg Confession in Yugoslavia, Hungary and Rumania—in relation to which the co-operation of the Russian Church with the World Council of Churches would be the greatest possible gain. It would be a great satisfaction to see the Russian Church take the prominent part in the World Council of Churches and in reconstruction generally to which its history and achievements entitle it.

The Unifying Function of the Churches

"I have spoken of the connection of the Church in the occupied countries with the resistance movements. There is in these resistance movements a real spiritual quality. They stand for the European spiritual traditions of humanism, science, law and government, and a natural bond has been shown to exist between patriotic men with different backgrounds in the Church and outside the Church, inspired by a passion for freedom and justice. The Church, be it Catholic, Protestant or Orthodox, has a unifying function

to fulfil in the days which follow the liberation. Members of the Church opposition to dictatorship must stand side by side with old friends of the resistance movements in the permanent safeguarding of civic rights. It would be tragic if misunderstandings or even rival organizations were to develop between the Churches and the trade unions on the Continent after their common resistance to the Nazis in the war. The Church must take its full part with trade unionists and all men of good will in the task of improving social conditions and developing the political and social conscience. Trade Unionists are not pagans.

The Rights of the Common Man

"Further, in the safeguarding of civic rights, the Church—Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox—must also think of the large masses of the population who are unable to speak for themselves. After liberation there is a danger of civil strife breaking out in many places. In all formerly occupied countries and the present occupied countries there are collaborators or Quislings—sometimes very few—and there are resisters. But there is also the non-political man-in-the-street, and he, I suppose, as a rule comprises the great majority of the population. His rights require protection. So, just as in Athens the Greek nation seems inclined to look to the Primate of the Greek Church, Archbishop Damaskinos, for a role of mediation, I see in other countries the possibility of a role of mediation for the Church. I must pray the indulgence of your Lordships for speaking so much of the contribution which the Church has to offer for the unifying of Europe, but, after all, the Christian religion was the original bond of unity among the European peoples. I believe that in a time of distress and moral disintegration like the present, the Christian religion, together with the other spiritual traditions—humanism, science, law and government—may still prove one of the great unifying forces of Europe, one of the principal agencies for ensuring his fundamental rights and liberties to every European citizen.